Rt. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701
4/7/73

Dear Oscar,

It has been a long time since you pondered whether to publish WHITEWASH. It seems much longer than a little over eight years. I guess that is because of the kind of life I've led and because of what that success cost me.

I don't know how clear your recollection is of whether Mr. Seligman now remembers it, but you then spoke to him to see if there was any way in which he could help me. He was then at 342 Madison.

It seems likely that WHITEWASH is the most rejected book in literary history. It also seems that most of the publishers who rejected the book somehow hold it against me. Official displeasure, which is real, may also figure in it. In all the submissions I made, there was no single serious editorial criticism of the work. In every case I can remember, the decision was policy. Whatever the reason, I have to consider myself close to unpublishable. I am sure the subject of political assassinations is except, perhaps, as fiction.

Before I met you and before Capote turned to the non-fiction novel, during those long drives to and from New York, I started writing one with a tape recorder on the Jersey Turnpike and the J.F.K.Memorial Highway. In doing this I learned that I am not a novelist. And that, really, is why I am now writing.

I was working on two when JFK was assassinated. Both had good movie prospects. With the changes in sexual attitudes, the possibilities of one are considerably enhanced. Partly because I had never done anything except non-fiction, these had social worth. One is a personal story, of what happened to us when we farmed. Sort of a combination of The Egg and I and Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House. I called it Everything Happened. We did have a world-famous farm. The everything that happened was tragic but it must be handled as funny. I find I am incapable of it. To one not involved it would be very funny.

In the course of my assassination investigations I have lived a novel. Aside from the investigating, I have actually lived with a strange assortment of people. One was a Minuteman, if you remember those violent, fascist boyos. (I had another Minuteman as an informant and from him I got their inside stuff that makes The Anarchists Cookbook look like a compendium of recipes for crepes Suzette!) Another was the mother of a would-be assassin, then confined "for the security of the President". One of James Earl Ray's brothers is still another. (I have hours of James Earl Ray on tape. I am his unpaid investigator and without then having met him or even exchanged letters with him, I got him to ask a friend of mine to represent him. This is the man who today represents James McCord. From him I can't guarantee a first-person story but if you'd like I can make the effort.All my Ray tapes were made inside maximum-security jails.) Still another is a young woman who says she was spying on me for the CIA. (If I can't prove she was, I do have carbon copies of other of their surveillance on me. To get that monkey off my back I am now seeking an ACLU-ttpe lawyer who will sue over it.)

And in the course of this work I have come accross a large number of properties that I think hold real commercial possibilities while serving socially-useful purposes. I mean things having no connection with political assassinations. Close to 20 of them when last I made mental calculation. One should make another Citizen Kane, non-fiction in content and limitless in potential after Last Tango. I am talking about one of the world's richest men. Co-author would be the former FBI agent he hired to keep him alive, a man now a friend of mine and no writer. No Clifford Irving stuff, as you can readily find out for yourself.

Aside from lacking experience in the novel, I am still hung up on the political assassinations. By now I probably have the world's largest private collection of FBI reports - so many I have several thousand I've not yet had time to read. I have a fair amount of the official evidence that was withheld from the Warren Commission.

So, in the past year, I have been looking for others who might be interested in doing with these properties what I cannot. If you want a professional opinion of one, you can get it easily from Walter Glanse, an editor at Bantam. His wife now has one of these non-fiction properties. Walter can give you his estimate of what it can be. He and I both think it can make a movie.

If you represent writers who can do something with these properties, I have them. I'd like to be able to talk to you about them. However, I am so broke I can't afford a trip to New York. If either of you ever gets to Washington or Baltimore, each city is but an hour away and that I can manage. I have need to get to New York because there is much money due me and I have to find a lawyer. If I locate a lawyer by mail, I will be going to New York. An alternative, if what I have indicated sounds at all interesting, is for you to come here. While I have been writing this I have been glancing at the "wild" rabbits going through my carport to clean up what remains of the food I put out for the birds yesterday. The fish in our pond rise to the surface when they hear my voice. It is like Walden on this mountainside close to Camp David. I think you'd find it a short vacation. From either New York tunnel to here there is no single traffic light and expressway to less than 10 minutes away. The trip takes from four to five hours, depending on the driver, the time of the day and traffic.

You may remember that our last conversation having anything to do with assassinations was when you asked me if I would be chief investigator for a commission the Kohlberg foundation was considering setting up. I have since then worked in the way I would have had this come to pass. I now have what at some point will be a valuable university archive. I have completed what I think is the most shocking of all the books, embodying much of the suppressed evidence and putting it together in a way that I think at some point will represent some value to the surviving Kennedys. I don't think any publisher would now go for it. I do think that if I could print it, which I can't, I could at least break even. I have started one book that might have commercial viability and researched another that should. The first is tentatively titled Agent Oswald (he was) and the second Tiger to Ride: The Untold Story of the Cuba Missle Crisis.

One of the means by which I get suppressed evidence is by suing the government. I have done it thrice with success. Having established my willingness to take them to court, they sometimes decide it will hurt less to just give me what I want and avoid attracting attention to it. With the completed book, this is what happened and the documents I have for facsimile reproduction are scandalously sensational. With the two not completed I have suits I can file. They could attract attention to the books.

Tomorrow I will be 60. But I'm not worn out yet. I'm weary but still energetic. I started writing this before the sun was up and I'll do a full day's work. Until about two years ago I hadn't averaged four hours sleep in about six years. I have stretched this to close to six now. Thus I have been able to accumulate much material. I hope you can find some way of getting interested in it. I think it could be mutually profitable. And worthwhile, if that appeals to you.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg